

GINGRICH and the gentleman from Texas, Mr. ARMEY, majority leader do not get their way with the balanced budget. At the same time as we move toward this default on March 1 or February 29, the Congress is going to recess today or tomorrow for 2 weeks and just go home and forget about it, when default can be imminent, when they are threatening default.

The gentleman from Texas is with me who knows more probably about what default will mean to veterans, has been a leader on these issues, what exactly it will mean to an awful lot of veterans in this country in addition to all the other problems that the first default in the history of the United States of America in 220 years would mean.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS].

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I know this issue of defaulting on the good faith and credit of the American economy and our Government debts is an issue that a lot of folks back home do not necessarily relate to themselves personally. But I would like to specifically address what the default on March 1 could do to men and women who put their lives on the line for our country.

I am very grateful to have the opportunity to be the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. So on a regular basis I have a chance to go out to our VA hospitals and see those men and women who were combat injured and put their lives on the line.

Let me quote from Jesse Brown himself, a very distinguished combat veteran who was very seriously wounded in service to our Nation. He said that veterans and their families have suffered enough. They should not be the victims of a battle they cannot even fight. The battle that Secretary Brown is talking about is the game of Russian roulette that is being played with the American economy in threatening to shut down our Government once again and to default on our debt.

Let me just put this in real terms, to how a Republican pushed default on our debt, especially if we are going into recess and get a paid vacation for the next month and only come back 4 days before the March 1 default, let me talk about how this would affect real American veterans: 2.2 million veterans with service-connected disabilities may receive bad checks March 1. More than 300,000 survivors of veterans who died from service-connected causes may receive bad checks.

To be even more clear on that, what that means is that widows of combat veterans who died in service to our Nation may receive bad checks, in effect, hot checks on March 1 from the VA.

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Nearly three-quarters of a million poor wartime veterans or survivors may receive bad checks. Also, \$140 mil-

lion a month in education program funds, G.I. Montgomery College loan funds would not go out to veterans on March 1 and for each month thereafter, if the leadership of this House does not keep us here for the month of February, and have us deal directly and honestly with the debt default issue. Hardworking VA employers and employees, people who try to take care of our veterans and hospitals all over this country, once again will not be paid for their work. That will have a devastating impact on the quality of people we can attract to work in our VA hospitals.

The bottom line to all of this, Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman and to our American veterans, is they need to understand that this complex, convoluted discussion of default is something that affects America's veterans, it affects 44 million senior citizens receiving Social Security checks, including many that are on SSI, that receive checks because they are disabled, in wheelchairs, and need that check to pay for their bills.

This is a real issue, a terribly important one that affects real families. It is devastating, most importantly, to America's working families, those people who are working hard to pay their bills and put their children through college. Their mortgage interest rates could go up after March 1. The money they borrowed to keep their farm alive or to expand their business or keep their business alive, that they have struggled so hard to support for years, those costs could go up.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman, that simply does not have to happen. In 220 years it never has happened in this country, through the Civil War, through World War II, through the burning of the Capitol.

#### THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENTAL DEFAULT, AND URGING SUPPORT FOR THE FAN FREEDOM AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RADANOVICH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, before my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio, leaves the floor, I want to shock him, if I can get his attention. If I can get the gentleman's attention, I want to shock him with the disclosure that I, in fact, am in at least partial agreement with the comments that he just made regarding the debt service, or, I am sorry, the debt ceiling and the extension of the debt ceiling. I would certainly not characterize the shutdown of the Government as, first of all, having been the responsibility of this Congress, but was, in fact, the responsibility of the President.

I also think that the impact of a shutdown of the Federal Government is very, very different from the impact of

a default on the full faith and creditworthiness of the U.S. Government. But notwithstanding those differences I, in fact, agree with you that the creditworthiness of our country should not be tampered with and that, in fact, the impact that such a thing might have would be far-reaching.

Mr. Speaker, I had not specifically thought about the impact it would have on veterans, but you can be darned sure that it would have a tremendous impact on every single person who holds any kind of obligation bearing interest on any debt in this country, including mortgages, including car loans, including student loans, et cetera, et cetera. Nobody knows this better than somebody from northeastern Ohio, where we were thrown into a default situation some two decades ago in the city of Cleveland.

And not only is there an economic consequence from this, but there is also a psychological stigma. It is a stigma that we have suffered under for some time, and only recently dug ourselves out of in the past 5 or so years.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Cleveland, Ohio. When he talks about the prospective default, never before have I heard political leaders in this country that are responsible leaders with titles like Speaker of the House and majority leader of the House make threats about default similar to the threats that were made about closing the Government down.

You can say it was the President's fault that the Government shut down, but the fact is it was written on the sleeve of the Speaker and lots of other leaders that "If we do not get what we want, we are going to shut the Government down. If we do not get what we want, we are going to force a default." That kind of discussion, those kinds of statements, send all kinds of uncertainties and tremors through the financial markets, something that is not good for the country, something that makes the United States look weak rather than strong, something that, frankly, scares a lot of people in this country.

Mr. HOKE. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, just to recap, and we will agree to disagree, but I really reject your characterization of the reason that we got to the situation we got to. It clearly was a result of the President's absolute refusal to negotiate in good faith what he had said he would, in fact, negotiate in good faith. I think it probably suffices to say that we will just disagree on that.

Mr. Speaker, in any event, I think that there are real consequences that have to be thought about in a very, and I only have a couple more minutes, and I actually did not want to talk about this, I wanted to talk about something completely different, so I am not going

to yield any more time, but I do agree at least in that respect.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to talk about this morning for the probably 3 minutes that I have remaining is football, good, old National Football League football.

I think it is particularly appropriate, since the Superbowl was just on Sunday, to remind my colleagues that it was in 1961 that Mr. Pete Rozelle came to the U.S. Congress and he asked this Congress to give a specific benefit not only to the NFL but also to the NBA, to the NHL, and to major league baseball, with an exemption from antitrust laws that would allow them to bundle all of their broadcasting rights and take them from each city and put them in one package and sell them.

This resulted in a bill called the Sports Broadcasting Act of 1961. It was passed in the House, it was passed in the Senate, it was signed into law by the President. I can assure you this was not something instigated by the House and Senate, I can assure you it was instigated by the NFL and other pro leagues.

What did they ask for? What was it they were asking for? What would they get in return? They said if they got this, it would allow them to be financially stable. What they would do in return is they would protect communities and they would protect fans.

I would ask the question, Mr. Speaker, do you think that fans and communities have, in fact, been protected over the past 35 years by the NFL, or in fact, have they taken this market power that came as the result of the Sports Broadcasting Act of 1961 and have they used it as a bludgeon to exploit, extort, and legally blackmail cities to compete against each other in order to not lose their franchise?

The 1961 act, by the way, Mr. Speaker, was followed by the 1966 act, and the 1966 act is the act of Congress that specifically, and Mr. Speaker, I see I am out of time, but I want to take more time later to explain the problem we have here to my colleagues, and then to ask for their support for the Fan Freedom and Community Protection Act that now has 40 cosponsors in the House, and to support that.

#### SUBSTITUTION OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to substitute my name for that of the next Democrat who is up.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

#### URGING REPUBLICAN MEMBERS TO SIGN DISCHARGE PETITION TO AVOID GOVERNMENTAL DEFAULT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, before my colleague, the gentleman from Cleveland, OH [Mr. HOKE] leaves, I appreciate his comments about governmental default. I would just offer the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] the opportunity to come down here in the well and join over 150 Members.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DOGGETT. No, I will not yield. Mr. Speaker, we do not need any more of this crybaby nonsense around here. The question that I was asking the gentleman from Ohio is, that in the event that he feels, and I do commend him for his comments on default, he feels as strongly about it as he said, then I would ask him to come down and join the over 150 Members of this House who have already signed on a discharge petition so that today, if we could get a few more signatures, we could vote to avoid this problem of default and go ahead and resolve the debt limit right now.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman wishes to respond to that, I would be glad to yield to him briefly to do that.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman, no, I will not join. I will tell him why I will not. Because that particular piece of legislation gives another \$500 billion of additional extension on the debt ceiling, a half a trillion dollars. I think that is absolutely dead wrong. It is the kind of license that he and the other lovers of big government in this Congress on the other side that are now in the minority want. I refuse it. I reject it.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, that is interesting to hear, since it was a limit that was already in the Republican reconciliation bill. You have already voted to do that two or three times here. But now you feel a need to have a crowbar to hijack the Government, to pressure the President, to threaten the future of this country by waiting until a few days before we enter the first default in the 200-plus-year history of this country. It is that kind of political shenanigans that the people of this country are rejecting.

Mr. Speaker, I heard on the way over here this morning that there was another low in the temperature in Embarrassment, MN. They had gotten down to minus 40 or minus 50. That may be a low in terms of the temperature, but you know, I have not seen a low like we have here in this House this morning.

Just look around. You will not find many Members on the floor. Why is that? Because after a 5- or 6-day weekend that we just celebrated, the Republican leadership does not have one piece of legislation on this floor for the Congress to act on today. They think work is not only a four-letter word, but a dirty four-letter word. What is this

Congress doing, if here, even before the lunch hour, we cannot get about working and dealing with the critical problems that this country faces?

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, all the news from the north end of this country is not cold news, because I see a report here from the State of Oregon. Our distinguished colleague here in the House, the gentleman from Oregon, Congressman RON WYDEN, is now Senator RON WYDEN, because the people of Oregon had an opportunity to consider this proposal to let Medicare wither on the vine, to consider the proposal to have unilateral disarmament on our environment, to consider the mistaken priorities of this House Republican leadership, and they voted "no," and in favor of sending a Democrat to the U.S. Senate.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Senate came within one vote, one vote, of passing the very kind of adjustment in the debt limit to protect the full faith and credit of this country, the same type that I asked the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] to come down here and sign, along with over 150 Democrats, to not threaten the creditworthiness of our country. One vote. And now Senator RON WYDEN will be over there to cast a vote for fiscal responsibility.

I commend and congratulate him, Mr. Speaker, but I particularly commend the people of Oregon for speaking out against this extremist agenda and doing what they have the power to do, and that is hold their public officials accountable, and replace a Republican with a Democrat, and a very progressive and responsible Democrat, to do something about the tragic circumstances which this extremist agenda has placed the country in.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DOGGETT. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that some Members on the Republican side of the aisle would not walk those 45 feet it would take to sign a discharge petition so we would not default on our debt, so that on March 1 we could pay Social Security recipients their checks, and veterans, and even soldiers serving in Bosnia now will not get paid if we do not do something about this debt problem.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the gentleman a question. If he and I were in business and we were within 30 days of our company going bankrupt, and we took a 26-day vacation and went to Hawaii and got a paid vacation and said, "We will come back 4 days before our company goes bankrupt," what do you think the stockholders of that company would do to you and me?

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I think they would throw out the management of the company. That is exactly what the people of the United States are going to do if we continue to have the kind of shenanigans that have been